

GLOSSARY

Definitions of Selected Emergency Alert System Terms

Activation

The initiation of the Emergency Alert System by transmission of the Emergency Alert System codes

ASCII

A standard set of text characters with numerical equivalents

Attention Signal

Eight seconds of two tones (853 and 960 Hz) used as an audio alert

Audio Frequency Shift Keying (AFSK)

A digital modulation technique that uses two shifting audio frequencies to transmit binary data

Authenticator Word Lists

A list of words that federal officials send prior to official Emergency Alert System national activation; used to substantiate the information being sent

Authorization Letter

The official authorization letter, given by the FCC, for a broadcast station to go off the air during a national level activation of the Emergency Alert System

Automatic Interruption

The automatic encoding and transmission of Emergency Alert System codes for preselected events

Baud Rate

The speed of data transmitted, equal to number of elements sent per second (equal to bits per second if a bit is the element)

Bit Rate

The speed of binary data transmitted, equal to the number of digital bits sent per second

Certification

An equipment authorization issued by the FCC based on representations and test data submitted by the applicant for equipment designated to be operated without individual license under Parts 15 and 18 of the rules

Class D FM station

A station whose output power is 10 Watts or less

Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS)

A service intended to deliver satellite signals directly to consumers using small, relatively inexpensive receive stations

Decoder (Emergency Alert System)

An electronic device used by Emergency Alert System participants to receive alerts and to translate the Emergency Alert System codes into a visual message

Decoder (Two-Tone)

An electronic device that alerts operators to the reception of the two-tone signal

Emergency Action Notification (EAN)

The message for national Emergency Alert System activation

Emergency Action Termination (EAT)

The message for national Emergency Alert System termination

Encoder (Emergency Alert System)

A electronic device used by Emergency Alert System participants to originate Emergency Alert System alerts by creating the Emergency Alert System codes for transmission to other participants and the public

Encoder (Two-Tone)

A electronic device that produces the two-tone signal

EOM (end-of-message) Code

In ASCII form 'NNNN', this burst of data, sent three times, signifies the end of an Emergency Alert System message and Emergency Alert System activation

Event Codes

A three character ASCII code in the Emergency Alert System headers that denotes the type or cause of emergency event

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

One of the three federal agencies that administer the Emergency Alert System

FIPS(Federal Information Processing System) Number

A five character ASCII code in the Emergency Alert System headers that represent those counties affected by an Emergency Alert System activation, as defined by the Federal Information Processing System that assigns each state and territory with their respective counties a five digit number

Header Code

A single string of intelligent digital Emergency Alert System ASCII data that includes the originator, event, location, time period, and other basic information concerning an emergency; three header codes precede the voice warning message

Julian Calendar

A method of specifying the date by the number of days which have passed since the first day of January in a year

Key Source

A source which is central to the dissemination of emergency alerts and information, such as National Primary, State Primary, State Relay or Local Primary broadcast stations or cable systems

Local Primary (LP)

A key source within an Emergency Alert System Local Area that is the primary source of Emergency Alert System programming for that area

Location Code

An ASCII code in an Emergency Alert System header that specifies the location of an emergency utilizing the five character Federal Information Processing System (FIPS) code of a state and county, and a sixth character to designate nine divisions of a county

Low Power Television (LPTV)

A low-power power television transmitting station which may originate original programming from a local source

Mapbook

A list of broadcast stations and cable systems and their designation delineated by state and local area for use by other stations to determine the best source of Emergency Alert System monitoring; an FCC generated attachment to every state plan

Mark Frequency

The audio frequency of audio frequency shift keying (AFSK) modulation that corresponds to a digital bit of one (1); the mark frequency of Emergency Alert System codes is 6250/3 Hz, or approximately 2083.33 Hz

Monitoring Assignment

The off-air broadcast or cable sources of Emergency Alert System activations and programming as given in the FCC Mapbook and the state plan

National Control Point Procedures

Those national Emergency Alert System procedures used only by national networks and program suppliers

National Information Center (NIC)

A source of official federal government information

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

One of the three federal agencies that participate in Emergency Alert System

National Periodic Test (NPT)

A test of National Primary Emergency Alert System sources

National Primary (NP)

A primary source of Presidential or other national Emergency Alert System activations and programming, including broadcast stations involved with the PEP system and EAN Networks

National Weather Service (NWS)

An operation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that is directly responsible for issuing local weather-related emergency alerts and warnings in addition to day-to-day forecasts and other weather activities

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio (NWR)

A service of the National Weather Service that provides to a local area continuous broadcasts of the latest weather information and any weather-related emergency warnings using one of seven VHF radio channels

Non-participating National (NN)

An Emergency Alert System source (usually a broadcast station) that has elected not to participate in the National-level Emergency Alert System and removes its carrier from the air if a national-level activation occurs

Operating Handbook

A document issued by the FCC that instructs broadcast station and cable personnel of the actions they must take during an activation of Emergency Alert System

Operator Interruption

The transmission of an Emergency Alert System activation which has been manually initiated by broadcast station or cable system personnel

Originator Code

A three character ASCII code in an Emergency Alert System header which denotes the source of an activation

Participating National (PN)

Broadcast stations, cable systems, or MDS stations which monitor primary sources of Emergency Alert System programming and directly feed emergency alerts to the public

Preselected Code

An Emergency Alert System event which the operator of Emergency Alert System equipment has chosen to be automatically encoded and retransmitted upon reception

Primary Entry Point (PEP)

Key broadcast stations throughout the U.S. which together can provide national emergency information

Protocol

A standard set of guidelines by which digital information encoded and decoded, including the common code structure, character set used, the sequence and timing of codes, and modulation technique used for radio transmission

Program Priorities

The precedence of the information that must be transmitted during an Emergency Alert System activation, namely national, local, and state activations in that order

Radio Broadcast Data System (RBDS)

A defined protocol for data that is transmitted on the 57 kHz subcarrier of FM radio broadcast stations utilized mainly by consumer devices equipped to receive it

Required Monthly Test (RMT)

A coordinated monthly test of Emergency Alert System operations involving the full receiving and transmission of Emergency Alert System codes, Attention Signal, Emergency Alert System test programming, and Emergency Alert System end-of-message (EOM) codes

Required Weekly Test (RWT)

An independent weekly test of Emergency Alert System equipment only involving the decoding and encoding of Emergency Alert System header codes and end-of-message (EOM) codes

RS232

A common interface standard which specifies the mechanical connection, electrical signals, and the function of the signals carried across the interface

Space Frequency

The audio frequency of AFSK modulation that corresponds to a digital bit of zero (0); the space frequency of Emergency Alert System codes is 6250/4 Hz, or 1562.5 Hz

State/Local Plan

A document that details monitoring assignments, actions to be taken in emergency activations, and other guidance for broadcasters and cable personnel in use of the Emergency Alert System

State Primary (SP)

A primary source of Emergency Alert System state programming which can originate with a Governor or designated representative, such as a state's emergency operations officer

State Relay (SR)

An entity which receives and retransmits Emergency Alert System activations in a State Relay Network to assist in bringing a state activation to all Emergency Alert System Local Area of a state

State Relay Network

A system of facilities used to distribute State Emergency Alert System activations and programming across a state

Subcarrier

An inaudible portion of the broadcast signal that is added to the program signal of the FM or TV sound and these can include the FM 57 kHz, 67 kHz, 69 kHz, and 92 kHz and the TV Subsidiary Communications Services

Subsidiary Communications Services

A subcarrier of television and FM stations providing a second audio programming source

UTC

Coordinated Universal Time, the world-wide common time standard that is used in Emergency Alert System headers for time stamp

Valid Code

An Emergency Alert System header which has been matched bit-for-bit with one of two other received headers thereby checked for validity

WRSAME

Weather Radio Specific Area Message Encoder, a device used by National Weather Service to broadcast WRSAME data on the National Weather Radio for day-to-day forecasts and weather related emergency announcements